

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 193560

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR

SUBJECT: USG POSITION ON ERITREA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3212
1. FOLLOWING IS MAY 16 PRESS BRIEFING EXCHANGE WHICH
GAVE U.S. POSITION ON ERITREA.

QUOTE: OUR OWN VIEW IS THAT THE ERITREAN CONFLICT,
WHICH IS LONGSTANDING, CAN ONLY BE TRULY RESOLVED
THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.

WE DEPLORE THE CONTINUING SERIOUS BLOODSHED. WE ARE
PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION MUTUALLY AGREED TO BY
THE ETHIOPIANS AND THE ERITREANS.

IN THIS CONNECTION, IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THERE WAS
A UN SPONSORED FEDERATION PLAN OF 1950 WHICH WAS INSTITUT-
ED IN ERITREA IN 1952 AND TERMINATED BY THE PREVIOUS
ETHIOPIAN REGIME IN 1962.

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Q. WHY ARE YOU PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION? ON
WHAT BASIS DO WE ACCEPT OR REJECT INTERNAL SOLUTIONS IN
OTHER COUNTRIES?

A. WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANY KIND OF SOLUTION WHICH

IS NOT ONE IMPOSED BY OUTSIDE MILITARY FORCES. THAT IS THE POINT OF THIS STATEMENT. IT IS NOT THAT WE HAVE A VETO OVER WHAT IS DONE INSIDE ANOTHER COUNTRY. IT IS IN CONTRAST TO THE ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE IT BY A MILITARY SOLUTION, WITH THE USE OF OUTSIDE FORCES.

Q. THE LANGUAGE IMPLIES THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT HAS TO MEASURE UP TO OUR STANDARDS.

A. NO. I AM CONTRASTING THAT TO WHAT WE FIND UNACCEPTABLE WHICH IS A MILITARILY IMPOSED SOLUTION.

Q. ARE YOU ENDORSING THE ARRANGEMENT THAT THE UN MADE IN 1952 AS THE PROPER WAY TO SETTLE THIS CONFLICT?

A. NO. WHAT I AM NOTING IS THAT THAT WAS A SOLUTION WHICH WAS FOLLOWED, AND IT WAS BUILT ON THE NOTION OF A NEGOTIATED FEDERATION. WE ARE RAISING THESE QUESTIONS, AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, AND ARE CONTINUING TO RAISE, WITH A NUMBER OF STATES, IN WHICH WE MADE OUR FEELINGS CLEAR ON THE SUBJECT OF THE EXTERNAL FORCES THAT ARE IN PLAY THERE. END QUOTE.

2. A MORE SUCCINCT STATEMENT OF OUR POLICY WAS PREPARED ON MAY 23 FOR A PRESIDENTIAL NEWS CONFERENCE BUT WAS NOT USED. TEXT FOLLOWS:
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QUOTE: WE BELIEVE THAT A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THIS LONGSTANDING PROBLEM CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE BASIS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IS READILY AVAILABLE IN THE FEDERAL ARRANGEMENTS APPROVED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1950. THOSE ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDED INTERNAL SELF-GOVERNMENT TO THE ERITREANS WHILE ENSURING ETHIOPIA'S ACCESS TO THE SEA. THE ERITREAN PROBLEM WAS NOT CREATED BY THE PRESENT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT BUT BY ITS PREDECESSOR'S ACTION IN TERMINATING THE UN-SPONSORED FEDERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN 1962. WE HAVE HOPED FOR SOME TIME THAT THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS ATTEMPTED TO RECTIFY MANY OF THE PROBLEMS IT INHERITED FROM THE PAST, WOULD VIEW THE ERITREAN PROBLEM IN THAT LIGHT AND SEEK A SOLUTION WHICH WOULD ENHANCE THE PROSPECTS FOR ERITREANS AND ETHIOPIANS TO LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE, RATHER THAN PURSUING A COURSE WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE BITTERNESS BETWEEN THEM. END QUOTE.

3. ABOVE FOR EMBASSY'S BACKGROUND. VANCE

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